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P A P E R
IN
MANUFACTURES.

MATTING MADE OF THE *TYPIA LATIFOLIA*.

*The small or CERES MEDAL of the Society was this Session voted to Mr. WILLIAM SALISBURY, of Brompton, for MATTING, and other articles made of the *TYPHA LATIFOLIA* (greater Cat's-tail). Specimens of the articles are placed in the Repository of the Society.*

THE material of which matting, and the rush-bottoms (as they are called) of chairs, are usually made, is the *scirpus lacustris*, known in some parts of England by the name bull-rush, and in Durham and Northumberland by that of polecive. It grows naturally in deep slow streams, and is particularly abundant in the neighbourhood of Newport Pagnel, in Buckinghamshire.

The demand for this article, however, in the Newport

Pagnel manufactories is considerably greater than that district can supply, and in consequence large importations of the scirpus are made from Holland. Hence in time of war the article is often scarce, and at an exorbitant price.

Prior to the Winter of 1817, Mr. Salisbury, induced by a laudable desire of opening new sources of industry to the unemployed poor, attempted, in various ways, to apply the leaves of the *typha latifolia* (flag, or greater cat's-tail) to the same purposes as the scirpus. For this purpose he was allowed, by the overseers of the parish of St. George's, Hanover-square, to employ some of their paupers in collecting about $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of the *typha* from the marshy grounds about Little Chelsea and Clapham, and afterwards in manufacturing a part of it into mats, baskets, hassocks, chair-bottoms, &c.

Samples of these various articles were laid before the Society in December 1817, and it appeared that with equal skill in manipulation equally neat work might be produced from the scirpus and from the *typha*. It being, however, a matter of considerable importance to ascertain the relative durability of the two articles under similar circumstances of ordinary wear, the following experiment was made:—A piece of the best Dutch matting at 2s. 6d. a yard, and a similar one of Mr. Salisbury's manufacture were laid down side by side in the Society's premises on the 13th December 1817. Their relative situations were occasionally changed, in order to equalize, as nearly as possible, the wear to which they were exposed, and on 27th March, 1821, they were taken up and examined by the Committee of Manufactures. On minute inspection, they appeared to be about half worn out, and there was no very perceptible difference in the condition of each.

With regard to the relative expense of procuring and preparing the two articles for manufacture, the Society possess no

very certain data, as the use of the *typha* was at first set on foot chiefly in order to employ those parish poor who would otherwise have been idle. Two guineas were paid by Mr. S. for liberty to cut as much of the *typha* as he pleased from about ten acres of swampy land, near Hammersmith. The matting has been sold at from 9*d.* to 15*d.* per yard, and between 1,000 and 1,500 yards have been disposed of during the last three years.

The *typha* abounds in all marsh ditches and uncultivated swampy ground in every part of the kingdom, whereas the *scirpus* is found in quantity sufficient for manufacture only in certain districts; hence the former must be much more accessible and cheaper than even the *scirpus* of home growth; and the Society indulge the hope, that by giving this notice a place in their annual volume, the knowledge and the use of so abundant and cheap a material may be extended throughout the kingdom, and may form a means of domestic employment to the younger members of poor families.